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Patent Office
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I, GAYE TURNER, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. PR 3215 for a patent by AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY PTY LTD filed on 15 January 2001.

I further certify that pursuant to the provisions of Section 37 of the Patents Act 1990 Application No. 14988/01 was treated as a provisional application and reallocated No PR 3215.

I further certify that the name of the applicant has been amended to ~~AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY LIMITED~~ pursuant to the provisions of Section 104 of the Patents Act 1990.

WITNESS my hand this
Twentieth day of December 2001

GAYE TURNER
TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION
SUPPORT AND SALES

AUSTRALIA

PATENTS ACT 1990

SECTION 37

I DIRECT THAT THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE
TAKEN TO BE, AND TO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN,
A PROVISIONAL APPLICATION.

Lisa Trevena 22.02.01
DELEGATE OF THE COMMISSIONER DATE

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

FOR A PETTY PATENT

ORIGINAL



Name of Applicant: AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY ^{Limited} PTY LTD

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Invention Title: GAMING MACHINE

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to me/us:-

GAMING MACHINE

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to gaming machines. The invention has been developed primarily for computerised gaming machines and will be described herein
5 with reference to that application. However, the invention is not limited to that particular field of use and may be suitable for many other applications.

Background of the Invention

Gaming machines have long been known and are now one of the most common forms of gambling. Usually, gaming machines will simulate well known game of
10 chance. One of the oldest and best known forms of gaming machine is the rotating reel type "poker machine". In light of its popularity, the present invention will be described with reference to this type of gaming machine. However, it will be appreciated that this is purely illustrative and in no way limiting to the scope of the invention.

Poker machines use a series of three or more reels, each reel having symbols on its
15 peripheral edge. The reels are rotated upon the placement of a wager and then stopped to produce a random arrangement of symbols. Winnings are paid if the random arrangement of symbols matches one of the predetermined winning combinations.

More recently, these gaming machines have been computerised with a video screen replacing the physically rotating reels. Typically, the display screen presents an array of
20 symbols in five columns and three rows equating to the symbols that would normally be seen on the five physically rotating reels of an old style mechanical machine. Upon the placement of a wager, the five columns of symbols move downwardly across the display screen and then stopped in order to simulate a series of spinning reels.

Computerised machines have allowed players to bet on symbols appearing in one or more rows or columns instead of just the middle row which was traditionally the only row available for betting on in the old style mechanical machines. Other advancements include the use of wildcard symbols and secondary or "feature" games in order to make
5 the games more interesting and appealing to players.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the present invention to overcome or ameliorate at least one of the disadvantages of the prior art, or to provide a useful alternative.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a gaming machine adapted to display
10 an array of symbols selected randomly from a set of symbols and paying winnings on any predetermined winning combinations appearing in a portion of the array carrying a bet;

the randomly selected symbols being divided into groups of one or more symbols wherein the groups are sequentially positioned in the incomplete array, until it is
15 complete.

Preferably, the groups have two or more adjacent symbols. In a further preferred form, the number and configuration of the symbols in each of the groups is randomly selected and the groups are sequentially positioned in the incomplete array until it is mostly complete, whereafter wildcard symbols are positioned in the remaining positions
20 to complete the array.

In a particularly preferred form, one or more positions in the array are designated as having an associated bonus which is awarded if any winning combinations include a symbol situated on any of the designated positions. The bonus is associated with each of the designated positions may include :

a set number of extra credits to be added to the winnings normally awarded for the winning combination covering the designated position;

doubling, tripling or otherwise multiplying the winnings normally awarded for the winning combination covering the designated position; or

5 a set number of free games whereby the machine operates without requiring the placement of a wager.

In still further preferred forms, one or more of the groups consist entirely of wildcards. In these embodiments of the invention, the volatility of the game can be increased if the wildcards multiply the winnings associated with any of the winning
10 combinations that they appear in by a factor greater than one.

The volatility of a gaming machine is a reference to the average amount of any winnings paid by the machine and the frequency that winning combinations appear in the array. All gaming machines must, overtime, return a percentage of all bets received as winnings. This percentage is usually set by government regulation. A high volatility
15 gaming machine will return this percentage of the bets through relatively fewer wins of greater average amounts and conversely a low volatility gaming machine will return the set percentage of bets through a higher frequency of lower value wins.

For added visual interest, the symbols are displayed on simulated three dimensional objects. The three dimensional objects may be rectangular prisms with
20 symbols shown on every face.

In some forms, the groups can simply appear in the array or they can form above the array and drop down into their intended positions within array. The latter situation provides an extra degree of uncertainty and anticipation in the player who will not know where a group will be positioned in the array until it has stopped moving down the

screen. In this way, if the player sees that the partially complete array has some of the symbols required for a valuable winning combination and the next group of symbols dropping into position contains some or all of the remaining symbols required for the winning combination, a sense of excitement builds until the group is finally positioned
5 within the array.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that gaming machines according to the present invention offer a significant departure from conventional gaming machines which have a long tradition of form the random arrangement of symbols through a video simulation of adjacent spinning reels being brought to a halt. By creating the array in stages using a
10 series of groups of symbols, offers the player greater visual interest and provides a basis to raise the level of excitement and anticipation experienced.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which :

15 Figure 1 shows examples of the configuration of groups of symbols for use in a gaming machine according to the present invention;

Figure 2 shows the vacant array positions into which the groups of symbols are positioned;

Figure 3 shows an example of groups combining to complete an array of symbols
20 according to the present invention;

Figure 4 shows a group consisting entirely of wildcard symbols; and

Figure 5 shows a vacant array with certain designated array positions having associated bonuses.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Referring to Figures 1 and 2, schematic representations of the groups of symbols and partially complete array are shown. The partially complete five column, seven row of array is shown in Figure 2. While it is usually the case that the microprocessor has already determined the array of symbols at the commencement of the game, the present invention divides the array into groups containing one or more symbols. Figure 1 shows four groups of symbols that are positioned in the array shown in Figure 2. The symbols within each group may be the same or different and may also include wildcard symbols which can be used to substitute for any of the other available symbols. In the present embodiment, the groups are formed on the screen above the incomplete array and then dropped down into their predetermined position. The groups are formed and positioned in the array in sequence until the array is complete. Upon completion winnings are awarded to the player for any winning combinations appearing on any of the paylines carrying a bet.

The number and configuration of the groups can be randomly selected and the sequence with which they are positioned in the array may also be random. This allows the player to observe incremental build up of the array and also to watch the groups move into position within the array and possibly form a winning combination. This serves to heighten the sense of anticipation and excitement experienced by the player.

As an additional feature, the machine can be programmed to arbitrarily choose a point during the completion of the array where it simply fills in any vacant positions with wildcards. As shown in Figure 3, it is envisaged that this feature may be used when the only vacant positions left in the array are single positions that the machine has predetermined to be occupied by wildcards at the commencement of the game.

Another feature of the game may be groups of symbols that consist entirely of wildcards. As wildcards can substitute for any other symbols, a group of wildcards appearing together in an array is likely to form part of many of the available paylines. This can be very beneficial for the player especially if the player bets on all available
5 paylines. To further raise volatility of the game the wildcards may be assigned multiplying factors greater than one whereby the usual winnings associated with any winning combinations containing the wildcard will be multiplied by the multiplying factor.

Another feature made possible by the present invention is shown in Figure 5.
10 Positions within the vacant array can be designated as having associated bonuses. If a winning combination includes a symbol on one of the designated positions, which also happens to be on a payline carrying a bet, the player receives the bonus associated with the designated position. As shown, the bonus can simply be a multiplying factor to double or triple the usual winnings or simply additional credits or free games.

15 To add to the visual appeal, the symbols can be shown on simulated three dimensional objects which are then positioned on the vacant sites within the array. Rectangular prisms with symbols shown on each face could be conveniently rotated and assembled into the desired groups and then moved into position within the array.

By departing from the long standing traditional method of forming the array, the
20 present invention provides a gaming machine having numerous additional features to enhance a player's interest and enjoyment. While the present invention has been described herein by way of example only, ordinary workers in this field will readily recognise many variations and modifications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the broad inventive concept.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A gaming machine adapted to display an array of symbols selected randomly from a set of symbols and paying winnings on any predetermined winning combinations appearing in a portion of the array carrying a bet;
- 5 the randomly selected symbols being divided into groups of one or more symbols wherein the groups are sequentially positioned in the incomplete array until it is complete.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the groups have two or more adjacent symbols.
- 10 3. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the number and configuration of the symbols on each of the groups is randomly selected and the groups are sequentially positioned in the incomplete array until it is mostly complete;
- whereafter predetermined wildcards symbols are positioned in the remaining portions to complete the array.
- 15 4. A gaming machine according to claim 3, wherein one or more positions in the array are designated as having an associated bonus which is awarded in any winning combinations include a symbol situated on any of the designated positions.
5. A gaming machine according claim 4, wherein the bonuses associated with each of the designated positions include;
- 20 a set number of extra credits to be added to the winnings normally awarded for the winning combination covering the designated position;
- doubling, tripling or otherwise multiplying the winnings normally awarded for the winning combinations covering the designated position; or

a set number of free games whereby the machine operates without requiring the placement of wager.

6. A gaming machine according to claim 5, wherein one or more of the groups consist entirely of wildcards.
- 5 7. A gaming machine according to claim 6, wherein the wildcards multiply the winnings associated with any of the winning combinations that they are in by a factor greater than one.
8. A gaming machine according any of one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the symbols are displayed on simulated three dimensional objects.
- 10 9. A gaming machine according to claim 8, wherein the three dimensional objects are rectangular prisms with symbols shown on every face.

DATED this 15th Day of January, 2001

AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY ~~PTY LTD~~ Limited



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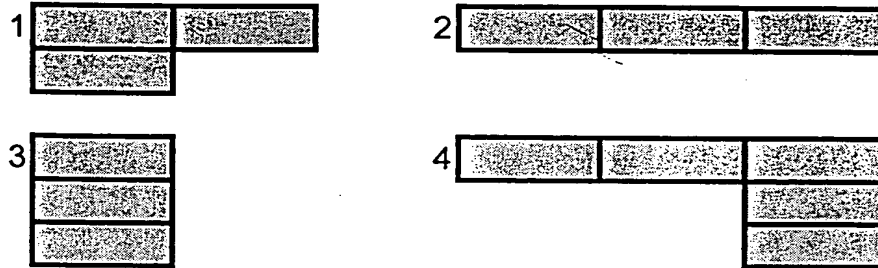


Fig. 1

	2	2	2	
3				
3		4	4	4
3		1	1	4
		1		4

Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Sub_x1	Sub_x3
Sub_x2	

Fig. 4

	Wins x2			20 free Games
			Bonus 100 Credits	
Bonus 500 Credits		Wins x3		

Fig. 5